

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 SCA-01 DHA-02 ORM-02 TRSE-00

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 /056 W

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, CI

SUBJECT: EXPELLED CHILEAN BISHOPS RETURN FROM ECUADOR

REF: SANTIAGO 7883

1. SUMMARY: THE DETENTION AND EXPULSION OF CLERGYMEN IN ECUADOR HAS MET WITH DISPARATE JUDGMENTS IN CHILE -- SO DISPARATE AS TO RESULT IN A VIOLENT CLASH BETWEEN SUPPORTERS AND OPPONENTS OF THE CHURCH POSITION, ON THE RETURN OF THE THREE CHILEAN PARTICIPANTS. THE CHURCH IS TAKING A STRONG STAND IN SUPPORT OF ITS BISHOPS; IT HAS CRITICIZED ECUADORAN AUTHORITIES AND THE "TENDENCIES" TREATMENT PART OF THE CHILEAN MEDIA GAVE THE INCIDENT. THE GOC AFTER THE FACT REGRETTED THE DISORDERS THAT OCCURRED WHEN THE THREE BISHOPS RETURNED. THE ECUADORAN INCIDENT WAS EXPLOITED BY RIGHTIST OPPONENTS OF CHILEAN CHURCH POLICY. END SUMMARY.

2. APPROXIMATELY 250 DEMONSTRATORS CLASHED AUGUST 15 AT PUDAHUEL AIRPORT ON THE RETURN OF THREE CHILEAN BISHOPS (CARLOS GONZALEZ, FERNANDO ARTIZTIA AND ENRIQUE ALVEAR), RECENTLY EXPELLED FROM ECUADOR FOR "INTERVENING IN THE PRIVATE AFFAIRS" OF THAT COUNTRY BY PARTICIPATING IN AN ECCLESIASTICAL MEETING.

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3. THE DISORDER, LASTING A HALF HOUR, ENSUED AS THE BISHOPS

CLEARED CUSTOMS AND PROCEEDED TO DEPART THE TERMINAL AREA. SEVERAL DEMONSTRATORS BRANDISHED SIGNS READING "PRIESTS (WHO ARE) SOLD," "SONS OF MARXISM" AND RELIGION YES, POLITICS NO." DEMONSTRATORS PITCHED COINS AT THE BISHOPS AND TAUNTED THEM, WHILE SUPPORTING PARTISANS APPLAUDED THE BISHOPS. CARABINEROS (UNIFORMED POLICE) STOOD BY PASSIVELY, INTERVENING ONLY WHEN THE FIGHTING INTENSIFIED, AND FINALLY ARRESTED 8 PERSONS -- INCLUDING 2 NEPHEWS OF BISHOP ALVEAR. ONE PERSON WAS TREATED FOR MINOR WOUNDS, AND ONE OF THE VEHICLES TRANSPORTING THE BISHOPS WAS EXTENSIVELY DAMAGED.

4. THE THREE BISHOPS LABELLED THE ECUADORAN DETENTION/EXPULSION ACTION AS "UNUSUAL, BRUSQUE AND WITHOUT PRECEDENT" AND TOLD THE PRESS BEFORE THE DEMONSTRATION BEGAN THAT THE RIOBAMBA CONFERENCE HAD BEEN STRICTLY ONE OF "BISHOP FRIENDS, WHO EXCHANGED VIEWS ON THE CHURCH COMMITMENT TO THE POOR OF LATIN AMERICA." THE THREE FURTHER COMPLAINED THAT THE CHILEAN EMBASSY IN QUITO HAD MADE NO EFFORT TO INTERCEDE ON THEIR BEHALF DURING THE TIME THEY WERE DETAINED. ACCORDING TO THE BISHOPS, THEY VISITED THE CHILEAN AMBASSADOR AFTER THEIR RELEASE, AND THE LATTER STATED THAT HE WAS SORRY, BUT HE HAD NOT KNOWN OF THE GOC ACTION.

5. THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR ISSUED A STATEMENT AUGUST 16, "REGRETTING"

THE DISORDER AND STATING THAT THE GOC WAS TAKING ALL STEPS TO AVERT ANY RECURRENCE. A "MERCURIO" EDITORIAL AUGUST 17 NOTED THE GOC STATEMENT AND REMARKED: "IT IS DEPLORABLE THAT THE AUTHORITIES -- UNDER STATE OF SIEGE IN FULL FORCE -- CAN ALLOW SUCH A MASSIVE DEMONSTRATION . . . (AND) NOT FORSEE THE UNCHINING OF INCIDENTS WHICH BRING BACK THOUGHTS OF EARLIER TIMES IN CHILE." THE EDITORIAL WAS CRITICAL OF THE BISHOPS' POSITION* BUT IT EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD CONDUCT A THOROUGH INVESTIGATION TO DETERMINE THE IDENTITY OF THE PERSONS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE INCIDENT, AND WHY IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE TO ESTABLISH ORDER AND ARREST THE CULPRITS WHEN THE INCIDENT OCCURRED.

6. THE COUNCIL OF BISHOPS SECRETARY, BISHOP CARLOS CAMUS, ISSUED A 9- POINT STATEMENT AUGUST 13 -- AFTER CONSULTING WITH OTHER BISHOPS IN SANTIAGO -- CLAIMING THAT THE CONFERENCE IN ECUADOR HAD BEEN "APOLITICAL AND NOT SUBVERSIVE." CAMUS FURTHER CRITICIZED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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A NATIONAL TELEVISION CHANNEL AND CERTAIN NEWS MEDIA FOR THEIR "TENDENTIOUS TREATMENT" OF THE AFFAIR.

7. COMMENT: WE DO NOT RECALL PHYSICAL VIOLENCE BETWEEN POLITICALLY MOTIVATED, POLARIZED ELEMENTS SINCE THE EARLY DAYS OF THE JUNTA. IN NOVEMBER 1975, WHEN THE AMERICAN RELIGIOUS PERSONS INVOLVED IN THE PROTECTION OF POLITICAL FUGITIVE EXTREMISTS LEFT CHILE, ONLY GOVERNMENT SUPPORTERS, AND NOT OPPONENTS DEMONSTRATED AT THE

AIRPORT. THE AUGUST 15 DEMONSTRATION MAY THUS BE VIEWED AS
A SIGN OF INCREASING POLITICAL TENSION. SIMILARLY, HUNDREDS
OF PERSONS HAVE GATHERED AT THE COURTS DURING THE JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS

IN CONNECTION WITH THE SUMMARY DEPORTATION OF CHILEAN HUMAN RIGHTS
LAWYERS EUGENIO VELASCO AND JAIME CASTILLO. THE PRESS HAS
DEPLORED THE AIRPORT DISORDERS AND IMPLICITLY CRITICIZED THE GOVERNMENT

FOR PERMITTING THEM. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER RECURRENCES
CAN BE PREVENTED.

3. AS THIS TELEGRAM WAS READY FOR DISPATCH, THE EMBASSY RECEIVED
PRELIMINARY INFORMATION ON A MEETING DURING THE DAY OF THE PERMANENT
COMMITTEE OF THE CATHOLIC EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE. THE RESULTING STATEMENT

SAID THAT PERSONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE GOC WERE IDENTIFIED AS HAVING
MANAGED THE DEMONSTRATION AGAINST THE THREE BISHOPS AUGUST 13,
AND IT NOTED THAT PERSONS COMMITTING VIOLENCE AGAINST AN ARCHBISHOP
OR BISHOP AUTOMATICALLY ARE SUBJECT TO DETERMINATION OF EXCOMMUNI-
CATION BY THE VATICAN. THE EMBASSY WILL REPORT FURTHER AS FIRM
INFORMATION BECOMES AVAILABLE.

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